

**Is Case Management Rhetoric or Reality?  
A Survey on the Use of Case Management in  
Australian Residential Aged Care Facilities**

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## **Certificate of Authorship / Originality**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Nicole Brooke

.....

Signature of Candidate

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## **Abstract**

Case management is an integrative and collaborative process of coordinating individual care through assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation. The practice of case management within the residential aged care sector in Australia was explored using a cross-sectional census survey approach. Managers of all Australian residential aged care facilities were invited to participate, with 474 returns (17% response rate) and representativeness between states and territories observed. Using a criteria-based assessment, the survey data identified that 28% of facilities were undertaking case management activities; this population was statistically different from the facilities not meeting the criteria for case management. The survey also highlighted significant pressures for the sector, as reported by Facility Managers.

From the perspective of Facility Managers, case management had a positive impact on the facility. Managers identified case management to be associated with improved interprofessional collaboration, undertaking case conferences, increased compliance with care interventions, more accurate funding related to clients' needs, reduced staff workload and improvements in morale and teamwork, as well as a more competent and capable workforce. Undertaking case conferences was not however statistically associated with effective case management processes; collaborative and regular communication with clients and key stakeholders was more beneficial. Compared with previous published findings, residential aged care clients were identified to be more complex and had higher acuity levels. Staff continued to be constrained by high workloads and generally lacked skill and knowledge capabilities, particularly in relation to clinical leadership.

An integrative review of the case management literature, combined with the study data led to the development of a recommended case management model suitable for implementation within residential aged care; a system now distinguished by high staff workload and client acuity. The core elements of case management included: preparation (organisational vision, pathways and outcome measurements); implementation (comprehensive assessment and evaluation, reasonable caseload, skilled Case Managers and competent staff); and ongoing evaluation (client and key stakeholder engagement).

*Key Words:*

Aged care, Australia, Caseload, Care management, Case management, Case Manager, Client, Elderly, Leadership, Model, Resident, Residential

## Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACSAA	Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIN	Assistant in Nursing
CCCMM	Collaborative Care Case Management Model
CM	Case Management
CMSA	Case Management Society of America
COMs	Case Outcomes and Measures
CSE	Care Service Employee
CW	Care Worker
CW (Adv)	Care Worker (Advanced)
DON	Director of Nursing
EN	Enrolled Nurse
EEN	Endorsed Enrolled Nurse
GRADE	Grades of Recommendation, Assessment, Development and Evaluation
NICE	National Institute for Clinical Excellence
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NUM	Nurse Unit Manager
OT	Occupational Therapist
PCA	Personal Care Assistant
Qld	Queensland
RACF	Residential Aged Care Facility
RAPs	Residential Aged care Pathways
RCS	Residential Classification Scale
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trail
RN	Registered Nurse
SA	South Australia
Tas	Tasmania
VETAB	Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board
Vic	Victoria
WA	Western Australia



## **Glossary**

Accreditation – “System where an external, independent authorised body assesses an organisation’s compliance with a set of defined standards or criteria” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007b, p. xxi)

Ageing in Place – An initiative that enables residential aged care facilities with appropriate care and accommodation to support clients with increasing care needs (Hogan, 2004)

Caseload – number of clients per Case Manager.

Case Management – “A collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual’s health needs through communication and available resources to promote quality cost-effective outcomes” (Case Management Society of Australia, 2004, p. 6).

Client – “A person who has been assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team as requiring residential care” and who resides in a residential aged care facility (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008e, p. 111).

Critical Pathways – are a time line of events and interventions implemented to streamline a client’s trajectory based on a ‘typical’ and ‘normal’ client presentation in relation to a familiar diagnostic related grouping.

Discharge planning – refers to a formal process of seeking to minimise adverse client outcomes and expedite discharge.

Extra Service Facility – High or low care residential aged care facility, with ‘significantly higher’ standards of accommodation, food and services (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008b).

High Care Facility – A residential aged care facility for clients assessed as needing a high level of care services with 24 hour Registered Nurse support and supervision (also referred to as ‘nursing homes’).



Hostel - A residential aged care facility for clients assessed as initially requiring a low level of care services; commonly referred to within the aged care sector as a low care facility, or residential aged care facility (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008e, p. 110).

Interprofessional teams – in this study it refers to when accessing more than one health professional to support improved client outcomes.

Low Care Facility – A residential aged care facility for clients assessed as initially requiring a low level of care services. Low care facilities have no requirement to have staff supervision and client support by a Registered Nurse (also referred to as ‘hostels’).

Nursing Home – A residential aged care facility for clients assessed as needing a high level of care services approved under the National Health Act 1963; commonly referred to within the aged care sector as a high care facility, or residential aged care facility (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008e, p. 110).

Older Person –Persons aged 65 years and over.

Patient – A person who is temporarily receiving care in the acute health system.

Practice – A commonly utilised term in the health system incorporating application of skills, knowledge and attitude within routines and roles. It may signify nursing practice, management practice, knowledge utilisation or other similar concepts within the roles of health professionals.

Resident – A client who resides temporarily or permanently within a residential aged care facility (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008e). For consistency in this thesis, resident will be referred to as a client.

Residential Care – Personal and / or nursing care which includes: accommodation, provision and assistance with meals, cleaning, furniture and equipment (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2008e).

Residential Aged Care Facility – Accommodation for the frail and disadvantaged in the community, with nursing support and intervention. Typically, these facilities are for older persons, although this is not a defining characteristic. This term refers to both high and low care facilities.

## **Care Staff Terminology**

Care Worker (CW) – Care staff who undertake ‘hands on’ roles in the facility. They may have obtained a Certificate III qualification through Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) in aged care work or community services. Care Worker staff may also be referred to as AIN (Assistant in Nursing), CSE (Care Service Employee) or PCA (Personal Care Assistant), and work under direct supervision of a Registered Nurse or Enrolled Nurse.

Care Worker (Advanced) (CW (Adv)) – Care staff who work in a ‘hands on’ leadership capacity. They may have obtained a Certificate IV, Diploma (Enrolled Nurse/ Division 2), Diploma with medication certification (Endorsed Enrolled Nurse) or Advanced Diploma (Endorsed Enrolled Nurse) qualification through Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) in aged care work or community services. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Guidelines regulate EN and EEN in their scope of practice. Care Worker staff may also be referred to as CS (Care Supervisor), TL (Team Leader) or CC (Care Coordinator), and work under the supervision of a Registered Nurse.

Registered Nurse (RN) - This internationally recognised qualification enables participants to register with the relevant state Nursing and Midwifery Registration Board as RN or Division 1. They are able to perform at appropriate clinician levels utilising critical thinking and decision-making, reflective process analysis and evidenced-based practices. The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council Guidelines regulate Registered Nurses in their scope of practice.